



Environmental Assessment
City of Coralville Transit Facility and Parks Maintenance Facility
Coralville, Iowa
April 23, 2009



FEMA

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EA	Environmental Assessment
EO	Executive Order
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRMS	Flood Insurance Rate Maps
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
ROI	Region of Influence
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

The City of Coralville is located in Johnson County, Iowa. Coralville is the county seat of Johnson County, Iowa. Coralville is approximately 6 miles northwest of Iowa City and 22 miles south of Cedar Rapids.

On June 11, 2008, Coralville experienced heavy rains which caused severe flooding to most of the city. The Coralville Transit Facility and Parks Maintenance buildings were located near the Iowa River, which overflowed its banks leaving the Transit Facility and Parks Maintenance Facility under over five feet of water. The standing water caused the Transit facility and Parks Maintenance Facility to experience severe damages.

On May 27, 2008, President Bush declared a major disaster in the State of Iowa (DR-1763-IA) pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. Section 5121-5206. The incident period began on May 25, 2008 and closed August 13, 2008.

The city of Coralville received a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division to replace and relocate both the Transit Facility and the Parks Maintenance Facility. Figure 1 shows a map of the proposed new locations with engineering plans for the new facilities.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that Federal agencies evaluate the environmental effects of their proposed and alternative actions before deciding to fund an action. The President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has developed a series of regulations for implementing the NEPA. These regulations are included in Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Parts 1500–1508. They require the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) that includes an evaluation of alternative means of addressing the problem and a discussion of the potential environmental impacts of a proposed Federal action. An EA provides the evidence and analysis to determine whether the proposed Federal action will have a significant adverse effect on human health and the environment. An EA, as it relates to the FEMA program, must be prepared according to the requirements of the Stafford Act and 44 CFR, Part 10. This section of the Federal Code requires that FEMA take environmental considerations into account when authorizing funding or approving actions. This EA was conducted in accordance with both CEQ and FEMA regulations for the NEPA.

This EA will address the environmental issues associated with the construction of a new Transit Facility and Parks Maintenance Facility for the City of Coralville.

SECTION 2 PURPOSE AND NEED

FEMA's Public Assistance Program provides funds to repair or replace disaster-damaged, publicly owned facilities. The purpose of the proposed federal action is to relocate the Transit Facility and Park Maintenance Facility outside of the floodplain. As a result of the 2008 Iowa floods, the Coralville Transit Facility and Parks Maintenance Facility were both inundated with floodwaters in excess of five feet.

Relocating the Parks Maintenance Facility and Transit Facility is needed in order to provide the citizens of Coralville with a permanent facility that is removed from danger of reoccurring flood damage. The facilities provide the citizens of Coralville with public transit within the city, and disruptions in the facility causes disruptions with the public's day to day activities. The facilities also maintain city owned vehicles, including emergency response vehicles. The facility is needed to keep the city vehicles fully operational for both city government daily activities and emergency work. If these services were not readily available, the city may leave citizens without transportation which would mean they would be unable to complete day to day activities. The absence of the facilities could possibly jeopardize the safety of the city of Coralville if there are no means of repairing emergency response vehicles.

SECTION 3 ALTERNATIVES

NEPA requires the investigation and evaluation of reasonable project alternatives as part of a projects environmental review process. Two alternatives are addressed in this EA: the No-action Alternative, where FEMA would not fund a new Transit Facility and Parks Maintenance Facility, and the Proposed Action, where FEMA would relocate, and combine, the Transit Facility and Parks Maintenance Facility in Coralville, Johnson County, Iowa. The discussion includes Alternatives Analyzed and Dismissed.

3.1 NO-ACTION

The No Action Alternative would not replace the Coralville Transit Maintenance Facility and Parks Maintenance Facility. The city would have to rely on temporary facilities that are currently being used. The Transit Facility is currently operating out of three separate, but close, buildings. The three temporary buildings are located at 702 East 2nd Avenue, 708 East 2nd Avenue, and 802 East 2nd Avenue. The Parks Maintenance temporary facility is currently located at 770 Quarry Avenue.

The No Action Alternative is required in the environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). It is used to evaluate the effects of not providing assistance for the project.

3.2 PROPOSED ACTION: New Transit Facility and Parks Maintenance Facility

This alternative site provides a new location for the Transit Facility and Parks Maintenance Facility outside of the floodplain.

The Proposed Action would be to construct a new, combined facility located on 5.4 acres of land off of Hughes Street and 10th Street in Coralville, Iowa (see figure 2). The combined facility would maximize space and resources for the city. . The larger parcel also provides room for the further expansion in the future.

3.3 ALTERNATIVE CONSIDERED AND DISMISSED: Replace in Kind

Currently the Transit Facility and Parks Maintenance Facility are located in a 100 year flood zone. If the city of Coralville chose to replace the facilities in kind, the facilities would have to be constructed to meet all ordinances of the local floodplain administrator.

As a focused environmental assessment, only the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action will be carried forward for review.

SECTION 4 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND IMPACTS

Chapter 5 describes the existing environmental conditions that may be affected by the proposed construction of a new Coralville Transit Facility and Park Maintenance Facility. The environmental impacts of the No-action alternative were also analyzed.

This chapter also describes the potential environmental consequences of the proposed alternatives by comparing them with the potentially affected environmental components. Proposed activities were also evaluated against existing environmental documentation on current and planned actions and information on anticipated future projects to determine the potential for cumulative impacts. The potential for significant environmental consequences was evaluated utilizing the context and intensity considerations as defined in CEQ regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1508.27).

4.1 AIR QUALITY

The National Ambient Air Quality Standards established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency define the allowable concentrations of pollutants that may be reached but not exceeded in a given time period to protect human health (primary standard) and welfare (secondary standard) with a reasonable margin of safety. These standards include maximum concentrations for ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, lead, and particulate matter with a diameter of 10 microns or less. Johnson County is considered an attainment area for all criteria pollutants listed above. Air quality in the project and the surrounding area currently complies with Federal and State air quality standards as indicated by the entire state of Iowa being within an Air Quality Attainment Area.

4.1.1 NO-ACTION

The No-action Alternative would not affect air quality. No construction activities would occur with the selection of the No-action Alternative.

4.1.2 PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action would require the excavation of soil for the construction of the Coralville Transit Facility and Parks Maintenance Facility, which would result in the production of some fugitive dust. Best management practices would be utilized during construction to minimize dust. Construction activities would produce a minor, temporary, and localized impact from vehicle emissions and dust particles. Equipment use would temporarily increase emissions; however, no long-term air quality impacts are anticipated. Federal or state air quality attainment levels would not be exceeded. Based upon this information, there would be minimal impacts to air quality due to the implementation of the Proposed Action.

4.2 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Native or naturalized vegetation, wildlife, and the habitats in which they occur are collectively referred to as biological resources. Existing information on plant and animal species and habitat types in the vicinity of the proposed site was reviewed with special emphasis on the presence of any species listed as threatened or endangered by Federal or State agencies to assess their sensitivity to the effects of the alternatives.

Biological studies consisting of literature review, field reconnaissance, agency consultation, and map documentation were performed. A site visit was conducted on February 6, 2009. For the purpose of discussion, biological resources have been divided into the areas of protected species and habitats.

4.2.1 PROTECTED SPECIES AND HABITAT

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 establishes a Federal program to conserve, protect, and restore threatened or endangered plants and animals and their habitats. ESA specifically charges Federal agencies with the responsibility of using their authority to conserve threatened or endangered species.

All Federal agencies must ensure any action they authorize, fund, or carry out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of an endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction of critical habitat for these species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has identified six listed species found within Johnson County, Iowa: The threatened Western prairie fringed orchid (*Platanthera praeclara*), which is found in wet prairies and sedge meadows; the threatened Prairie bush clover (*Lespedeza leptostachya*), which is found in mesic prairies with gravelly soil; the threatened Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*), which is found in mesic to wet prairies; the endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), which is found in caves, mines, and stream corridors with well developed riparian woods and upland forests; the candidate Sheepnose mussel (*Plethobasus cyphus*), which is found in rivers; and the candidate Eastern massasauga (*Sistrurus c. catenatus*), which is found in wet areas including wet prairies, marshes, and low areas along rivers and lakes as well as adjacent uplands during part of the year.

Using a Geographic Information System (GIS) data-based mapping system, which contains documented sites of federally protected species in Iowa, FEMA examined the project area within the proposed location of the new facilities at Coralville. There were no identified federally protected species located at the site.

4.2.1.1 NO-ACTION

The No-action Alternative would not impact vegetation or wildlife in the project area. No construction activities would occur with the selection of the No-action Alternative.

4.2.1.2 PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed construction of the Coralville Transit Facility effect on threatened and endangered species has been determined to be “no effect”.

4.3 CULTURAL RESOURCES

In addition to review under NEPA, consideration of impacts to cultural resources is mandated under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), as amended and implemented by 36 CFR Part 800. Requirements include the identification of significant cultural resources that may be impacted by the alternatives. Cultural resources are prehistoric and historic sites, structures, districts, artifacts, or any other physical evidence of human activity considered important to a culture, subculture, or community for scientific, traditional, religious, or other reasons.

Only those cultural resources determined to be potentially significant under NHPA are subject to protection from adverse impacts resulting from an undertaking. To be considered significant, a cultural resource must meet one or more of the criteria established by the National Park Service that would make that resource eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

The term “eligible for inclusion in the NRHP” includes all properties that meet the NRHP listing criteria, which are specified in the Department of Interior regulations Title 36, Part 60.4 and NRHP Bulletin 15. Sites not yet evaluated may be considered potentially eligible for inclusion in the NRHP and, as such, are afforded the same regulatory consideration as nominated properties. Whether prehistoric, historic, or traditional, significant cultural resources are referred to as “historic properties.”

For the purposes of this analysis, the term region of influence (ROI) is synonymous with the “area of potential effect” as defined under cultural resources legislation. In general, the ROI for cultural resources at each alternative’s site encompasses areas requiring ground disturbance (e.g. areas of grading, cut and fill, etc) associated with the proposed development of the Coralville Transit Facility and Park Maintenance Facility.

According to the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office, there are no known structures within the area of potential effect. According to the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office, there are known archaeological sites within the project site of the Proposed Action.

4.3.1 ARCHEOLOGICAL

4.3.1.1 NO-ACTION

The No-action Alternative would not impact any standing historic structures, or pre-historic cultural sites. No construction activities would occur with the selection of the No-action Alternative.

4.3.1.2 PROPOSED ACTION

The area proposed for the new Parks Maintenance Facility and Transit Station in Coralville is sensitive for the presence of prehistoric archaeological sites as it is generally in close proximity to the floodplain of the Iowa River. This location lies close to a deeply buried, significant Late Archaic period (ca. 2000 B.C.) Indian encampment excavated within the past few years by the University of Iowa, Office of the State Archaeologist. There are also additional Native American archaeological sites in the area.

Even though the property proposed for the relocation of the facilities appears to have been graded and even possibly more deeply disturbed, the character and extent of disturbance has not been clearly delineated. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office indicated the need for an archaeological survey to determine the presence/absence of prehistoric occupation. If an archaeological site is present there is a good possibility, based on data derived from the University excavations, that the deposits (including features such as hearths, pits, and living surfaces) may be buried and thus have escaped damage from grading or other activities.

The determination of possible affects to archaeological sites is pending the completion of the Phase 1 archaeological survey. If the survey determines a presence of archaeological sites, conditions may be applied to the construction activities.

4.4 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The topography of the proposed Coralville Transit and Parks Maintenance Facility site is flat with a few lower depressions. Information from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service shows a single soil type with varying slopes is present on the site. The soil found at the proposed site is Fayette silt loam. The soils are found at varying slopes from 5 to 9 percent, 9 to 14 percent, and 18 to 25 percent. The Fayette Silt Loam found at the site is well drained. The frequency of flooding and ponding at this site is none. (U.S. Department of Agriculture).

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) was enacted in 1981 (P.L. 98-98) to minimize the unnecessary conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses as a result of Federal actions. In addition, the act seeks to ensure that Federal programs are administered in a manner that will be compatible with State and Local policies and

programs that have been developed to protect farmland. The policy of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is to protect significant agricultural lands from conversions that are irreversible and that result in the loss of essential food and environmental resources. The NRCS has developed criteria for assessing the efforts of Federal actions on converting farmland to other uses, including Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form AD-1066 that documents a site-scoring evaluation process to assess its potential agricultural value. In accordance with Section 1541 of the FPPA, the alternatives were reviewed for potential impacts on prime farmlands. The Prime Farmland map of Clayton County was consulted and indicates that Prime Farmlands are in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Action. However, the U.S. Department of Agriculture states that proposed projects on land already in urban development or water storage are not subject to the provisions FPPA. (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1986).

4.5 NOISE

The Noise Control Act was enacted in 1972 (P.L. 92-574). Inadequately controlled noise presents a growing danger to the health and welfare of the nation's population. The major sources of noise include transportation vehicles and equipment, machinery, appliances, other products in commerce, climate, and recreation. Sounds, which disrupt normal activities or otherwise diminish the quality of the environment, are designated as noise. Noise can be stationary or transient, intermittent or continuous.

4.5.1 NO-ACTION

The No-action Alternative would not affect noise levels within the project area or the surrounding community. No construction activities would occur with the selection of the No-action Alternative.

4.5.2 PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action would increase noise levels in the vicinity both during construction and during day to day operations of the Transit and Parks Maintenance Facility. It is anticipated that construction activities and most of the day to day activities would take place during daylight hour. The increased noise levels should not be significant to the area. The proposed site is located in an environment already susceptible to increased noise levels. The site is within an estimated 2 miles of interstate 80. There are no sensitive noise receptors (i.e., schools etc).

4.6 EXECUTIVE ORDER 12898 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Executive Order 12898 directs federal agencies to focus attention on human health and environmental conditions in minority and or low income communities. Its goals are to achieve environmental justice and foster nondiscrimination in federal programs that substantially affect human health or the environment. The intent is to give minority or low income communities greater opportunities for public participation in and access to

public information on matters related to human health and the environment. Of the 15,123 persons counted within city of Coralville by the 2000 U.S. Census, 13,152 are white, 640 African American, 459 Hispanic, 323 of more than one ethnic heritage, 786 person of Asian descent, and 9 Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. Median household income within Marion County and Indiana Township is \$38,080, slightly below the State of Iowa average. Based upon U.S. Census tract data, there would be little likelihood of disproportionate impacts on any low-income or minority group.

Section 4.6.1 NO-ACTION

The No Action Alternative would not result in a disproportionately high or adverse impact on low income or minority populations.

Section 4.6.2 PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action would not result in a disproportionately high or adverse impact on low income or minority populations.

4.7 TRANSPORTATION

Currently, the project site does not interfere with normal traffic circulation in the City of Coralville.

4.7.1 NO-ACTION

With the No-action Alternative, the transit facility would continue to use existing bus routes. There would be no impact to the existing traffic and circulation for the city of Coralville because there would not be any new construction activities.

4.7.2 PROPOSED ACTION

The construction of the Coralville Transit Facility would temporarily disrupt the traffic flow on Hughes Street during the construction of the facility. Once the Transit Facility and Park Maintenance Facility is constructed, the traffic flow of Hughes Street will not increase due to Transit buses. The city of Coralville plans on constructing an access road to the facility from 10th Street. The access road will be the primary entrance/exit for the facility. 10th Street is currently apart of several bus routes, therefore 10th street should see a minimal disruption in traffic flow.

4.8 WATER RESOURCES

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is responsible for permitting and enforcement functions dealing with building in U.S. waters and discharging dredged or fill material into U.S. waters. USACE regulations for building or working in navigable waters of the United States are authorized by the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.

These regulations often go hand in hand with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which establishes the USACE permit program for discharging dredged or fill material. The regulations are often used together because building in navigable waters of the United States also constitutes discharging dredged or fill material into water of the United States. In addition to regulating construction or work being done in navigable water of the United States, USACE regulates discharging into wetlands through the Section 404 permit program (see section 5.10.1, Wetlands).

4.8.1 WETLANDS

The Clean Water Act, as amended in 1977, established the basic framework for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States. The USACE regulates the discharge of dredged or filled material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands, pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Additionally, Executive Order (EO) 11990 (Protection of Wetlands) requires federal agencies to avoid, to the extent possible, adverse impact of wetlands.

4.8.1.1 NO-ACTION

The No-action Alternative would not affect wetlands. No construction activities would occur with the selection of the No-action Alternative.

4.8.1.2 PROPOSED ACTION

A review of the National Wetlands Inventory Map indicates no wetlands are located on or immediately adjacent to the proposed project site. A wetland delineation was conducted by the 1987 *Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual*. The Corps manual requires the presence of all three parameters (greater than 50% dominance of hydrophytic vegetation, evidence of hydric soils, and presence of hydrologic indicators) for an area to be considered a wetland. The Contractor would implement specific best management practices to reduce or eliminate runoff impacts during proposed construction activities of the Proposed Action and to reduce the potential for soil erosion after construction, regardless of whether a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit or a waiver from the permit requirement is secured (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2007). In addition, if required in consultation with the USACE a Section 404 permit would be obtained.

4.8.2 FLOODPLAINS

Executive Order (EO) 11988 requires the federal government to minimize the occupancy and modification to floodplains. Specifically, EO 11988 prohibits federal agencies from funding new construction in the 100-year floodplain, or 500-year floodplain for a critical facility (e.g. transit facility), unless there are no practical alternatives.

4.8.2.1 NO-ACTION

The current transit facility is located within an area classified by the National Flood Insurance Program as a “Flood Zone AE”, inside the Special Flood Hazard Area (100-year floodplain). The No Action would not be consistent with Executive Order 11988.

4.8.2.2 PROPOSED ACTION

The site identified for the relocated Transit Facility and Parks Maintenance Facility would not be located in either the Special Flood Hazard Area (100-year floodplain), or the 500-year floodplain, and thus would be consistent with Executive Order 11988 (Please see the Appendix for the area’s Flood Insurance Rate Map).

SECTION 5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts are defined as impacts on either the human or natural environment, which result from the incremental impact of an action when added to past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

Section 5.1 NO-ACTION

Under the No Action Alternative, no new construction would occur, thus there would be no potential to result in a cumulative impact upon the City of Coralville or surrounding area.

Section 5.2 PROPOSED ACTION

The Coralville Transit Facility and Parks Maintenance Facility relocation would comprise the replacement of a use in place prior to the 2008 Mid-West Storms and would not introduce a new facility to the area that would have the potential to result in a cumulative impact upon the Coralville or surrounding area.

SECTION 6 COORDINATION AND PERMITS

The following coordination and/or permits may be required before implementation of the alternatives identified below.

6.1.1 NO-ACTION

No-action Alternative is not a viable alternative for the Transit Facility and Parks Maintenance Facility.

6.2. PROPOSED ACTION

1. In the event that threatened or endangered species are observed in the project area, the FEMA Regional Environmental Officer shall request a Section 7 consultation with the USFWS (Section 4.2.1, Protected Species and Habitats).
2. If cultural resources (particularly human remains) are unexpectedly discovered during construction, activities would cease in the immediate area and the Iowa State Historic Preservation Officer and the FEMA Regional Environmental Officer would be notified before work would continue (section 4.3, Cultural Resources).

Section 7 PARTIES CONSULTED AND REFERENCES

7.1 PARTIES CONSULTED

City of Coralville

Dan Holderness, City Engineer

7.2 REFERENCES

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Section 8 LIST OF PREPARERS

8.1 GOVERNMENT PREPARERS

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Eric Wieland, Environmental Specialist, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region VII

Holly Pelt, Environmental Specialist, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region IV

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8.2 CONTRACTOR PREPARERS

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APPENDIX A

FIGURE 1: Site Plan for Proposed Transit Facility and Parks Maintenance Facility

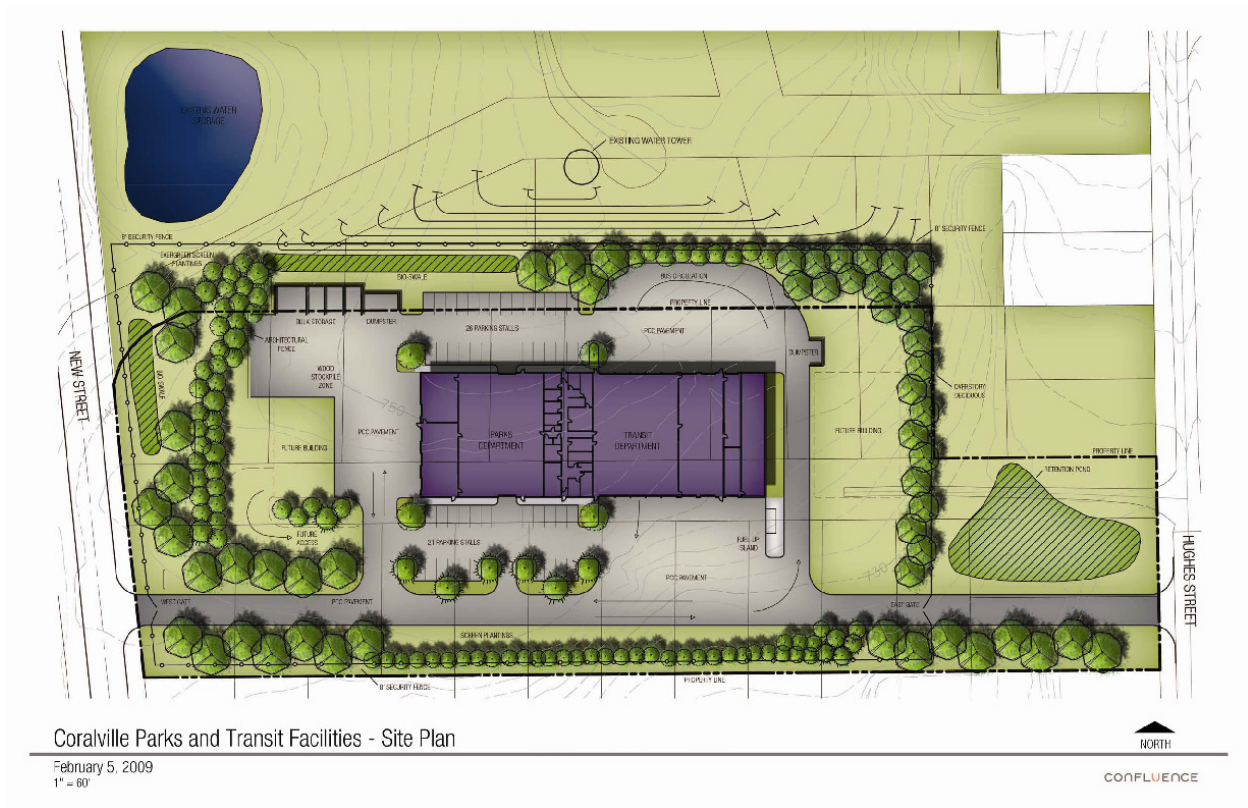
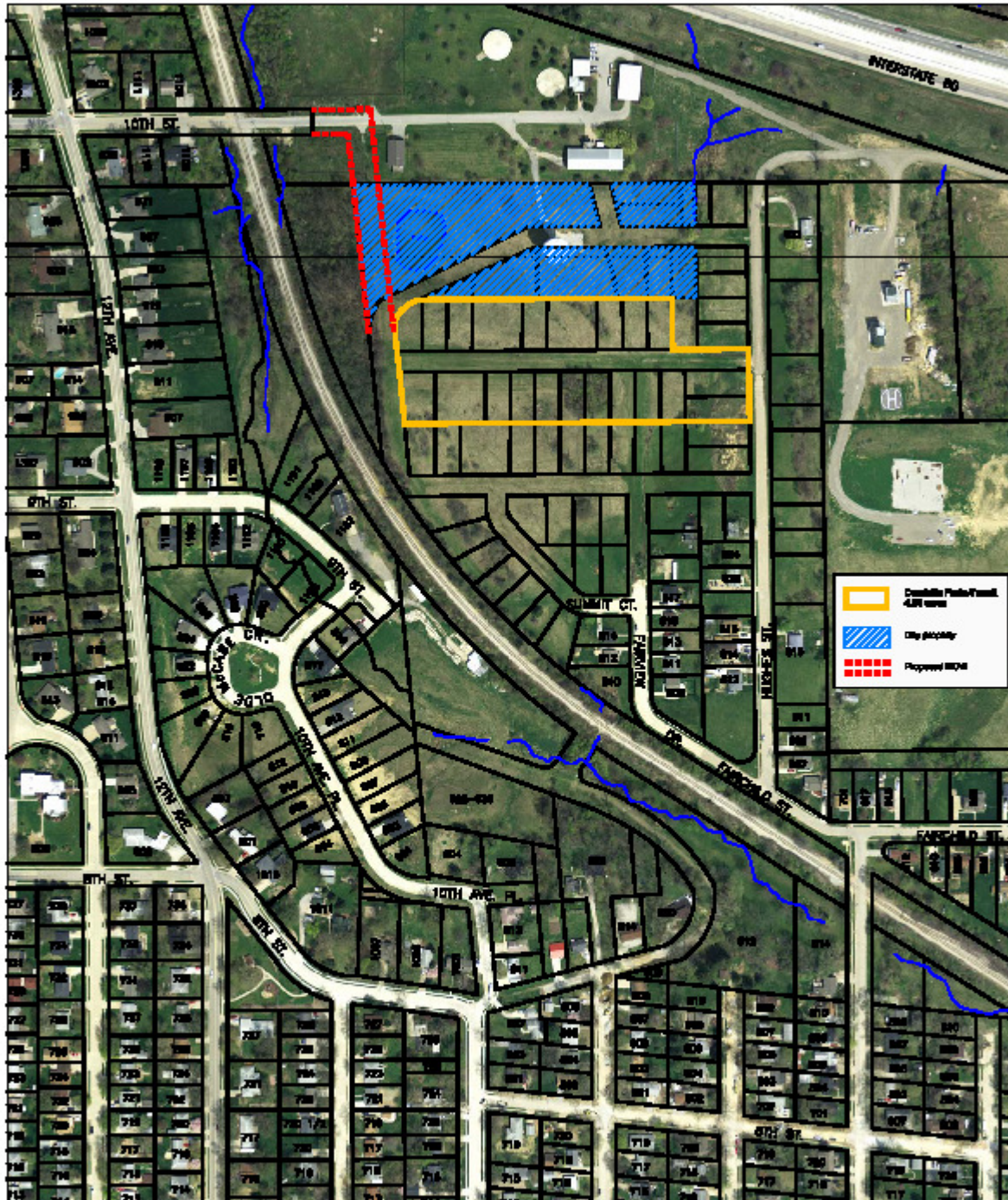


FIGURE 2: Proposed Site for the Transit Facility and Parks Maintenance Facility



Coralville Parks and Transit Facilities

Vicinity Map



February 2008

Figure 3: Flood Insurance Rate Map

